

# ST COLUMB'S CATHEDRAL

## Music Scholarship 2026/27

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### Information & Application Pack

St Columb's Cathedral invites applications for the Mark Fields Music Scholarship 2026/27, established in memory of Mark Fields, who passed away on 7 September 2025. Following Mark's death, the Fields family wished to create something positive and lasting in his memory. Reflecting the family's long association with music, St Columb's Cathedral and St Columb's School of Music, the Scholarship has been established to provide a young musician with an exceptional opportunity to develop their skills while becoming immersed in the musical life of the Cathedral. The Scholarship represents a package worth £2,000, combining individual tuition, financial support, mentoring and extensive practical experience within the Cathedral Music Department.

### Purpose of the Scholarship

The principal aim of the Mark Fields Music Scholarship is training, development and practical experience. The successful candidate will work alongside the Cathedral's Organist & Director of Music and Assistant Organist, developing a broad understanding of the work of a busy Cathedral music department. Depending upon the Scholar's existing experience and particular interests, this may include organ playing and accompaniment, singing, conducting, rehearsal technique, choir training, service preparation, music administration and other aspects of Cathedral music. The exact balance of training and duties will be tailored to the successful applicant. The Scholar is not expected to arrive as a finished church musician; rather, the Scholarship is designed for a young musician with musical potential, enthusiasm, commitment and a desire to learn.

### Opportunities and Duties

During the year, the Scholar will have opportunities to:

- Assist the Organist & Director of Music and Assistant Organist with Cathedral rehearsals, services and musical preparation.
- Sing with the Cathedral Choirs and/or Lay Clerks where appropriate.
- Develop vocal technique and wider choral experience.
- Develop conducting and rehearsal technique, including opportunities to rehearse singers under supervision.
- Observe and assist with the training of the Cathedral's Boy and Girl Choristers.
- Develop keyboard and organ skills where appropriate to the successful applicant.
- Gain experience of choral accompaniment, hymn playing, service planning and other practical church-music skills.
- Assist with the Cathedral music library and administration of the Music Department.
- Gain an understanding of the planning and preparation involved in maintaining a Cathedral music programme.
- Take part in special services, concerts and other significant musical events in the Cathedral calendar.
- Receive mentoring and guidance from experienced Cathedral musicians.

The precise programme will be developed around the abilities, interests and ambitions of the successful Scholar.

## **Training and Mentoring**

A significant element of the Scholarship is the opportunity for individual musical tuition and structured development. The Scholar will receive tuition through St Columb's School of Music, with the programme tailored to their particular needs and interests. Tuition may include areas such as:

- Organ
- Singing and vocal development
- Conducting and rehearsal technique
- Keyboard and accompaniment skills
- General musicianship

The Scholar will also work closely with the Cathedral's music staff and receive ongoing practical mentoring throughout the year. The intention is that the Scholar should finish the programme with substantially greater musical confidence, practical experience and a stronger foundation for further study or future involvement in church music, conducting, singing, organ playing or music education.

## **Who Should Apply?**

Applications are welcomed from young musicians who can demonstrate musical potential, enthusiasm and a serious interest in choral and church music. Applicants do not need to be accomplished organists or conductors. The Scholarship is primarily a developmental opportunity and the successful applicant's programme will be tailored to their existing abilities.

Applicants should:

- Have a good general level of musicianship.
- Demonstrate enthusiasm for choral and church music.
- Be willing to develop skills in areas outside their existing musical experience.
- Be reliable, organised and willing to learn.
- Be comfortable working as part of a team.
- Be willing to participate regularly in the musical life of St Columb's Cathedral.

Previous experience in singing, piano, organ, conducting, accompanying or another area of music would be advantageous but is not essential. The Scholarship may particularly suit a sixth-form, university, gap-year or early-career musician, including someone considering further study or a future career in church music, conducting, singing, organ playing or music education. The successful candidate must be able to meet the safeguarding and AccessNI requirements applicable to their duties.

## Commitment

The Scholar will be expected to participate regularly in the musical life of St Columb's Cathedral.

The Cathedral's normal weekly choral pattern is:

- **Wednesday, 4.30–6.00pm** – Girl Choristers rehearsal
- **Thursday, 4.30–6.00pm** – Boy Choristers rehearsal
- **Friday, 5.30–6.30pm** – Combined/Lay Clerks rehearsal
- **Sunday, 11.30am** – Choral Eucharist / Choral Matins / Family Service
- **Sunday, 4.00pm** – Choral Evensong / Compline

There are also additional services, rehearsals, concerts and special events throughout the year, particularly around the major festivals of the Cathedral calendar.

**The Music Scholar will not normally be expected to attend every rehearsal and service listed above.**

A regular programme of attendance will be agreed with the successful applicant, taking account of their school, university, employment or other commitments while ensuring that they receive meaningful and regular practical experience. Applicants should indicate on their application form any regular commitments which may affect their availability.

## Scholarship Award

The Mark Fields Music Scholarship is a package worth £2,000, designed to provide the successful candidate with a substantial programme of tuition, financial support, mentoring and practical musical experience.

The package will include:

- Individual musical tuition through St Columb's School of Music;
- A programme of tuition tailored to the successful Scholar, which may include organ, singing, conducting and other relevant areas;
- A financial stipend to support the Scholar during their appointment;
- Practical training and mentoring from the Cathedral's Organist & Director of Music and Assistant Organist;
- Opportunities to develop skills in singing, conducting, rehearsal technique, choir training, accompaniment and organ playing;
- Experience working with the Cathedral's Boy and Girl Choristers and Lay Clerks;
- Opportunities to assist at Cathedral services, rehearsals, concerts and special musical events;
- Experience of the administration, music library and wider work of a Cathedral Music Department.

There is no tuition fee or other charge to the Scholar for participation in the programme.

The Scholarship represents a significant investment in the development of a promising young musician, combining formal tuition and financial support with practical experience that can be difficult to gain through lessons or academic study alone.

## Scholarship Award

As a lasting symbol of the Scholarship, the Fields family has commissioned a special Music Scholar's Medal. The medal will be presented to each successful Scholar and will remain permanently associated with the Mark Fields Music Scholarship at St Columb's Cathedral. At the heart of the Scholarship is a simple aim: to give a young person an opportunity — to learn, gain experience, develop their talents and become part of the musical tradition of St Columb's Cathedral. Through supporting young musicians for many years to come, the Scholarship will provide a lasting and positive tribute to Mark's memory.

## Key Dates

|                        |                             |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Applications open      | 8 September 2026            |
| Closing date           | Friday 9 October 2026       |
| Auditions / interviews | 9 October – 23 October 2026 |
| Appointment announced  | Sunday 24 October 2026      |
| Scholarship begins     | Sunday 4 November 2026      |

## Audition and Interview

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to St Columb's Cathedral for a practical musical assessment and informal interview. Because the Scholarship is open to musicians from a range of musical backgrounds, the audition will be tailored appropriately to each applicant.

Candidates may be asked to:

- Perform a prepared piece on their principal instrument or as a singer.
- Undertake a short sight-reading or musicianship exercise.
- Take part in appropriate practical exercises relating to their existing musical experience.
- Discuss their musical background, interests and ambitions.
- Explain what they hope to gain from the Scholarship.

Candidates will receive full details of their individual audition requirements in advance.

The panel will consider musical potential and capacity to develop as well as current attainment. The Scholarship is intended to identify a young musician who will benefit from the opportunity rather than simply the most accomplished applicant.

## How to Apply

Please complete the application form contained in this pack and return it by Friday 9 October 2026 to: Attention of Nicky Morton - Email: [music@stcolumbsschoolofmusic.com](mailto:music@stcolumbsschoolofmusic.com)

Shortlisted applicants will then be contacted regarding their audition and interview.

Safeguarding: The successful applicant will be required to comply with the Cathedral's safeguarding procedures and any appropriate AccessNI requirements applicable to the role.

# Application Form

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## St. Columb's Cathedral Music Scholarship 2026/27

### 1. Personal Details

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Full name                   |  |
| Address                     |  |
| Email address               |  |
| Telephone / mobile          |  |
| Date of birth (if under 18) |  |

### 2. Education / Current Study or Employment

|                                          |  |
|------------------------------------------|--|
| School / college / university / employer |  |
| Course / year of study / position        |  |
| Relevant qualifications or examinations  |  |

### 3. Musical Training

|                                                           |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Principal instrument/voice:                               |  |
| Current teacher(s), if applicable:                        |  |
| Current / most recent grades or levels                    |  |
| Piano / keyboard qualifications or level (if applicable): |  |
| Other musical qualifications / instruments                |  |
|                                                           |  |

### 4. Music and Choral Experience

Please give details of any choirs, churches, schools, ensembles or other musical organisations with which you have been involved.

You may include experience of choral singing, organ or piano playing, accompanying, conducting, taking rehearsals, solo performance, music leadership or any other relevant musical activity.

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| Details |  |
|---------|--|

## 5. Supporting Statement

Please tell us why you are applying for the Mark Fields Music Scholarship, what you hope to gain from the opportunity and how it fits with your future musical ambitions.

You may also tell us which areas you would particularly like to develop — for example singing, conducting, organ playing, accompanying, choir training or music leadership — and include any other information you feel supports your application.

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Supporting statement |  |
|----------------------|--|

## 6. Availability

Please give details of your regular weekly commitments and identify any times when you would normally be unable to attend Cathedral rehearsals, services or other agreed duties.

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Regular commitments / restrictions |  |
|------------------------------------|--|

## 7. References

Please provide two referees. At least one should be able to comment on your musical ability and suitability for the scholarship. Referees should not normally be relatives.

|                         | Referee 1 | Referee 2 |
|-------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Name                    |           |           |
| Position / relationship |           |           |
| Organisation            |           |           |
| Email                   |           |           |
| Telephone               |           |           |

## 8. Declaration

I confirm that the information given in this application is accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that appointment is subject to satisfactory references and compliance with any safeguarding and AccessNI requirements applicable to the role.

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Signature |  |
| Date      |  |

If the applicant is under 18, a parent or guardian will be asked to confirm consent and safeguarding arrangements before appointment.